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AUTHOR	Zellner, Luana; Jinkins, Deborah; Gideon, Barbara; Doughty, Sharon; McNamara, Patricia
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study looks at the impact on the participants of 2 grant-supported initiatives over a 4-year period. The initiatives aimed at ways to improve the recruiting and mentoring of new school administrators, and ways to support experienced administrators throughout their careers. The School Leadership Initiative, a 3-year pilot mentor program, was designed mainly for assistant principals. The Richardson Mentor Principal program was created for seasoned administrators recognized for their achievements. The study comprises reflections and survey responses from principals and assistant principals who participated in the two initiatives and university professors who were its members. Included are three examples of school-change programs conducted by participants of the RMP program, each generating a list of recommendations for future programs for recruiting, developing, and supporting principals. Principal-preparation programs need to stress the following: (1) leadership practices: future leaders need opportunities to engage in planning, developing, directing, and implementing school programs; (2) support networks: administrators need mentoring and continuous support throughout their careers; (3) linking theory to practice: those in line for principalship need contextual experiences in developing leadership skills; mere managerial activities are not enough to prepare one to be a principal. (Contains 17 references.) (WFA)

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Saving the Principal: The Evolution of Initiatives That Made a Difference in the Recruitment and Retention of School Leadership

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Paper by

Dr. Luana Zellner, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
Dr. Deborah Jinkins, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas
Dr. Barbara Gideon, Crockett High School, Austin ISD, Austin, Texas
Sharon Doughty, Edgewood ISD, San Antonio, Texas
Dr. Patricia McNamara, Del Rio ISD, Del Rio, Texas

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Saving the Principal: The Evolution of Initiatives That Made a Difference in the Recruitment and Retention of School Leadership

Introduction

In an era when confidence in public educators is falling, recruitment for school leadership roles is becoming more difficult. The desire to lead and stay in a leadership position is not a position of choice; instead, it has become a position of challenge. Even with emphasis on infusion of leadership throughout the school [site-based decision making] and de-emphasis on a more traditional managerial leadership style, school leadership has not become easier nor more desirable as an occupation.

On the average, today's principal is male, white, around 50 years of age, earns $69,407, and has 6 years experience as a principal, but 25 years in education. Only 42% of all elementary principals are female. Only 3% are African American, <1% Latino or Asian. The model today needs everyone on the campus and community playing a part in making sure no child is left behind academically, emotionally, or culturally. Leadership preparation can no longer end with a certificate, certification or a degree, it must be on going, continuous, and supportive throughout the career of the principal (Zellner & Erlandson, 1997; Zellner, Skrla, & Erlandson, 2001).

Preservice preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development programs for school administrators [principals] have typically taken a functionalist approach (Slater, 1995) to training school leaders. Principalship aspirants acquire in their preservice preparation programs a set of skills and knowledge that "experts" in the field have decided they should have, and they are then sent out into schools to apply what they have learned. Subsequent professional development is left up to the principal--it is assumed that he or she will seek out appropriate training opportunities to acquire additional or more refined tools with which to do the job. Conceptualizing the principalship, and the preparation and training needs associated with it, in this scientific/bureaucratic fashion fails to take into account the complexity of educational environments (Walker & Stott, 1993; Zellner, Skrla, & Erlandson, 2001). With this in mind, how can preparation for the principalship be more effective? The intent of this study was to examine the impact of two grant supported initiatives on the recruitment and retention of a select group of campus administrators [principals & assistant principals] over a period of 4 years.

Our study identified the tenets of successful principal recruitment and retention strategies of participants in the School Leadership Initiative (SLI) and the Richardson Mentor Principal (RMP) program. The work of Erlandson, Stark, & Ward, 1996; Erlandson, 1997; Zellner & Erlandson, 1998; and Barth, 1999; in developing a

theoretical frame for designing a professional model that followed the career path of the principal was incorporated into the investigation.

In demonstrating the importance of a principals' mentor network in supporting the principal throughout their career, three examples of campus change projects conducted by participants in the RMP initiative were included with this paper. The three different campus change projects offered leadership opportunities to novice as well as seasoned professional school leaders alike. Each project improved the condition of the school in some way.

Mentoring and professional growth experiences offered to RMP fellows stemmed from a foundation laid by the SLI initiative, the previous initiative, The School Leadership Initiative (SLI) was a 3 year pilot mentor program designed primarily for the assistant principal. The RMP program (the second initiative) followed as a mentor program designed primarily for the seasoned school administrator who at some point in their career had been recognized for making a difference in their schools. Besides commitment to making a difference in the education of children in their schools, these selected principals were committed to making a change in how leadership is supported and nurtured throughout the campus.

The Study

The study included reflections and survey responses from school administrators [principals and assistant principals from both initiatives], and university professors who were members of the two university partnerships [SLI & RMP initiatives]. These initiatives focused on improving the way prospective school leaders are recruited and mentored as well as improving the way practicing administrators are supported and mentored throughout the life of their careers. The participants in this study were from small rural schools (one of which bordered Mexico), as well as schools in urban areas of high poverty. Seventy per cent of the participants were female, 30% were male. Sixty per cent of the participating principals were white and worked with middle to upper middle class students and staff. Thirty percent were African American and worked in schools that included student populations from communities at all income levels. Hispanic principals composed 10% of the participants. They worked in large urban high schools with diverse student populations. Each participant was engaged in making a difference in their own professional development as well as the development of leadership on their individual campuses.

The intent of the study was to identify key strategies that effectively enhanced how principals recruit, support, and mentor others into school leadership roles as a result of their involvement in a leadership initiative (Barth, 1990; Barth, 1999; Erlandson, Stark, & Ward, 1996; Fenwick, 2000). Our investigation employed the use of grounded

theoretical research procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which included categorization of data into thematic and subunits. Interview questions focused on principal perceptions of (1) their role in leadership; (2) their role in mentoring others into leadership; (3) their perception of "reflection" on practice; (4) their effectiveness as a school leader; and (5) their perception of the "change" process in building leadership capacity at the campus level.

A qualitative thematic strategy of data analysis was used to categorize and make judgments about the meaning of the data. Investigative procedures prescribed by social scientists, Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (Strauss& Corbin, 1990) worked best for this type of qualitative study. This investigative process led to interviews with 10 of the 17 participants in each of the 2 initiatives. Data was aggregated to incorporate a thematic approach. Interview data from each of the 10 selected participants in the study were coded based on the properties of reflective practice and team leadership. Instances of mentoring, and staff development experiences that enhanced leadership skills and job satisfaction were collected by way of on-line surveys, face to face interviews, email exchanges, and web board exchanges using the internet.

Results of the Study

The predominant themes and number of administrators that made these suggestions are:

Perception of Successful Leadership

1. Successful leaders are facilitators of change	10
2. Teachers emerge as leaders when an initiative is successful	5
3. Successful leaders have role models that are or were their mentors	10
4. Successful leaders provide time for themselves to reflect	10
a. on the effect of their own leadership on those they lead	8
b. on how their leadership effects the school	4
c. on the match between campus vision and actual practice	7
d. on mentoring others into leadership roles	10
e. on ways to positively create campus wide leadership	9
5. Successful leaders interpret as well as use data in their decision-making	10

What is Needed in the Recruitment of Leaders into the Principalship?

1. Principals need to mentor leadership on their campuses	10
2. Principals need to give teachers leadership opportunities and specific	

leadership roles on their campuses 10

3. The campus community as well as the community surrounding the school needs to understand and support the job of the principal. There needs to be an understanding of how difficult the job can be. 10

What is Needed to Sustain the Principalship?

1. Principals need a mentor network for support throughout their career. The network should include other principals and educators. 10
2. The principalship needs to include mentoring teachers and assistant principals into future leadership positions. 8
3. Assistant principals and teachers seeking leadership positions need leadership experiences. These experiences should include:
   a) addressing school issues,
   b) problem solving, and
   c) opportunities to participate in leadership activities that help build a learning community.

   These activities should include program development, curriculum alignment, assessment, and disaggregation of data for program planning and improvement. (Some of the data participants suggested principals disaggregate and utilize in decision making were: student performance, student test scores, teacher retention, teacher participation in professional growth activities, and teacher participation in leadership roles) 10
4. Principals need opportunities for professional development throughout their career. 10

Key Points of the Study

A mentoring network of principals as well as a framework of continuous support throughout the career of the principal is of prime importance. Those identified to be future leaders of schools need opportunities to engage in leadership activities that include planning, developing, directing, and implementing school programs and educational change that will make a positive difference in the campus community. Future leaders who are next in line for the principalship (assistant principals) need to engage in activities that go beyond the four Bs (bells, behavior, books, and bats). Engagement in managerial activities does not prepare the novice administrator for the many decisions that today's principals face. The majority of administrators in the study

agreed that the primary reasons for unsuccessful campus leadership include the principal's: 1) lack of ability to disseminate leadership throughout the campus; 2) inexperience in problem solving; 3) lack of reflection on leadership practice; 4) lack of experience in keeping the campus vision as a target; 5) lack of experience in self initiated leadership activities; and 6) lack of opportunity to be mentored and supported during initial stages of development as a leader.

Three Examples of Change in Leadership Development and Its Implementation: Change Projects Initiated by the Richardson Mentor Principals (RMPs)

Stories of three principals and the campus change projects they identified as pivotal in making a difference in the leadership of their own schools reflect how mentored leadership can enhance the principals' performance. These 3 principals made a difference in achievement of campus goals and objectives for student performance and teacher satisfaction. Richardson Mentor Principal (RMP) Fellows were asked to identify the change projects that impacted their schools, impacted their careers, and/or impacted their beliefs about leadership development. The following scenarios are just 3 of 10 that will be included in a monograph to be published in 2002.

First Scenario

Diffusion of an Innovation: The Multiple Roles of Leadership in an Urban High School
by Barbara Gideon, Principal, Crockett High School, Austin, Texas

"When I first came to Crockett High School 25 years ago...there was a large sign on a counter in front of the book keeper. The sign said: 'No Change.'...And the rumor was... that's the school motto. After a while somebody would bring up a new idea and we'd say, 'Uh-uh--no change. It says so in the office.' When the fifth principal came, there was change. ...And with this change (came) a new accountability as well." ---*Gil, an experienced drama teacher* (Gideon, Erlandson, 2001)

In developing a learning school after years of discontent and stagnation, Dr. Barbara Gideon brought about campus change by first having teams of teachers scrutinize achievement data and practice. Teams were created by department, by grade level, and by area of intent. Teachers in these teams were encouraged to make decisions and see them to fruition. The teams led real projects, including creating and implementing a 9th-grade camp (a three-day orientation prior to school's opening), creating an advisory time for students, and designing a school wide structure that

combines traditional high school departments into learning communities. As teams grew in their understanding of school wide concerns, they were better able to understand other teachers' experiences. The members of various teams developed an appreciation of the impact of teachers' actions in a learning school. They learned to reflect on their practice. A set of guiding principles emerged as staff reflected on their practice:

1. The principal is the formal head of the school, but leadership is everyone's responsibility.
2. All school professionals must have valid information readily available to them.
3. Every school professional must make free and informed choices regarding participation in the renewal efforts.
4. Every school professional is included in monitoring the renewal process. (Gideon, Erlandson, 2001)

In becoming a learning school it was important for leadership to be mentored and supported at every step of the process in building a learning school. Teachers accepted their new roles, but it must be remembered that adult learning makes a school a organization. According to Barbara Gideon, the following points are what the Crockett staff learned as it became a teacher led school:

1. Change, to be successful, must address a real need in the school.
2. The interpersonal link between principal and teachers is critical.
3. To keep the faith, lots of encouragement is helpful.
4. Even with well-laid plans, there will be problems. (Gideon, 2000; Gideon, Erlandson, 2001)

At Crockett, the staff had come to understand that growth occurs as teachers reflect, refine, and work in the context of their regular classroom instruction. Teachers know the answers are not in programs, but in processes. Reform is not a quick fix. Reform instead depends upon how the adults interact and make a difference. It is this principal's belief that when adults in schools continue to learn, to take risks, and to try new instructional strategies together, students learn (Gideon, Erlandson, 2001). As Roland Barth (1999) says: When many lead and learn, the school wins.

<u>What principal preparation programs can learn from this scenario</u>

The following 5 recommendations by Dr. Barbara Gideon are based on her experience as an urban high school principal. It is her belief that the skills of leadership,

collaboration, reflection, and mentoring are key components of good leadership that need to be part of any leadership training program.

Recommendations

1. Teacher leaders and assistant principals should be given opportunities to wrestle with real school challenges in a safe environment under the tutelage of the principal.
2. Collaboration takes practice. Only by having many stakeholders in a school contribute to decisions do future leaders arise for our schools.
3. Reflection on practice is critical to supporting ones self and others. Successes can be celebrated and challenges addressed when one takes time to pause and reflect. Time to do this is always difficult. One model that works at Crockett High School is that the principal takes time to write a weekly public reflection as a part of the school bulletin. That commitment forces her to pause and reflect. The articles she encourages her faculty to read each week serve as a catalyst for reflection on the part of others at the school.
4. Principals have an obligation to mentor and teach others in their schools. They do that both by purposeful direct teaching and informed guidance. Assistant principals should have an active role in curriculum and instruction as well as the more prevalent management issues.
5. Future principals will be more easily recruited when many have had opportunities to lead, when they have worked collaboratively and when they experience the "principalship" as larger than one person. When those conditions are met, the position of principal will be more attractive to future leaders.

Second Scenario

<u>Extracting and Applying Grounded Theory in Describing a Learning School</u>
by Sharon Doughty, Principal, Alonso Perales Elementary School, Edgewood ISD, San Antonio, Texas

"Meeting a staff, student body, and community whose morale is at an all-time low, and whose embarrassment is at an all time high can be a very humbling experience for a school principal. Principal Doughty had to step back and reflect on what would be

the best plan of action to encourage the people of this school community to work with her in revitalizing the school. Her reflection led her to the position that the first step toward recovery of the school community's self-esteem must be a realization that there is a plan to make things successful and that every stake holder can be a part of it. Therefore, the first step was to develop a comprehensive plan that could pull everyone together to form a cohesive team." *excerpt from The Emerging Principalship: Maximizing the School's Human Potential.* (Skrla et al., 2001, p. 157)

Principal Doughty's RMP project focused on the examination of productive patterns of individual and organizational learning in three case studies: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago (The John Dewey School), David Crockett High School, Austin, Texas, and Alonso Perales Elementary School, San Antonio, Texas. These three schools are identified as learning schools in the literature, and as such, the leadership function of the schools is defined by the actions of the professional members of the school. The members of these learning schools display certain behavioral attributes which encourage trust, collaboration and effective problem solving. In order to understand and attempt to replicate the success of learning schools, the purpose of this project was to provide data to comprehensively define the behavioral attributes critical to a learning school. Once defined, these attributes were used to construct an inventory to guide the evaluation and development of other learning schools. The two research questions addressed in this project were: 1) What are the behaviorally defined attributes of learning perceptions of the degree to which three attributes are present in a single school, and 2) What is the perception of a professional educator in a single school using the inventory?

An examination of the data collected for this project revealed that there are eight key behaviorally defined attributes which identify the actions of the members of the learning schools formed using the framework of Chris Argyris and Donald Schon's (1974,1996) Model II theories-in use. These attributes parallel the behaviors found in the Model II school environment wherein the consequences for learning for all individuals are based upon "disconfirmable processes, double loop learning, and the public testing of theories" (Erlandson et al., 1996. p. 11). When the individuals in the learning school communities examined in this project displayed these behaviorally defined attributes, open dialogue, reflection, and enhanced problem solving ensued. Learning was expanded and a common meaning was formed. The eight behaviorally defined attributes of learning schools identified in Doughty's study are:

1. Individuals in the schools take into account all pertinent information when dealing with an issue.
2. Individuals make free and informed choices when dealing with situations in the school.

3. Individuals are encouraged to openly dialogue and discuss alternative ideas using available and applicable information.
4. Individuals commit to the choices they make and consistently monitor their implementation.
5. Individuals take part in the making designs and plans to reach the goals they have chosen.
6. Individuals share in the implementation and supervision of designs and plans they have been involved in making.
7. Individuals understand that failures or surprises found in the implementation and supervision of a task are acceptable.
8. Individuals acknowledge that revisions to their plans and designs are all right and are an important part of learning and growing.

Although Principal Doughty's project significantly adds to the body of knowledge regarding learning schools, further research and applications of the inventory are needed to investigate how these behaviorally defined attributes are developed in individuals. To effectively guide the advancement of other learning schools, educational leaders should be able to identify these learning school attributes in their own schools. It is her belief that before this can occur, leaders must first understand the processes individuals undergo in learning what the attributes are. Following this, educational leaders should be able to then begin to learn how to develop the attributes in the members of their school communities, as well as in themselves.

What principal preparation programs can learn from this scenario

Principal preparation programs need to provide opportunities for students (prospective school leaders) to collaboratively work with practicing principals on real school issues. These collaborative leadership opportunities should include: 1. Designing a school vision; 2. Designing benchmarks for targeted goals; 3. Designing an evaluation plan for tracking progress toward reaching targeted goals; 4. Designing the framework for creating a learning school; and 5. Designing a plan for mentoring and supporting dissemination of leadership throughout the school. These activities should be contextually based whenever possible throughout the student's preparation for the principalship.

The following 3 recommendations by Sharon Doughty are based on the study she conducted as well as her experience as an elementary school principal. It is her belief that effective school leadership can no longer be the sole responsibility of the principal.

> "The leadership in effective schools must be defined by multiple leaders who take a shared and interactive role in moving the school's mission forward in realizing their goals and responsibilities to the students they serve. In order to "save" the principal as well as to continue to produce and maintain effective schools around our nation, we have to first begin the task of looking deeper into

the role of the principal as a leader of leaders. Administrator preparation programs."

Sharon Doughty, Principal, Perales Elementary School.

Recommendations

1. The principal as a leader of leaders must be able to encourage the members of their school community to effectively dialogue, critique, and reflect on their own teaching and learning practices. In this respect, the school community as a whole acts out theories of learning together in a constant cyclical movement from theory to diagnosis to practice and back again. Argyris and Schön refer to this practice as "double-loop learning" wherein reflection on one's theories occurs interactively with one's actions and causes governing variables or mental models to be forever in a state of change. It is the charge of principals to create and sustain these constructive, cooperative processes within their own schools. These processes can only be found in what are called "learning schools".

2. In learning schools, the leadership function is not defined exclusively by the actions of the principal, but rather by the actions of all of the professional members of the schools. The faculty and staff of learning schools display certain behavioral attributes that encourage trust, collaboration and effective problem solving. Learning schools are successful schools in which productive patterns of learning enable the school to constantly regenerate itself and continuously build its own abilities to produce.

3. In order for a school principal to understand and attempt to replicate the success of learning schools, they need to first be able to recognize the behaviorally defined attributes found in the these kinds of schools. Following this, principals can then learn how to develop the attributes in the members of their school communities, as well as in themselves.

Third Scenario

Not Your Ordinary School by Dr. Deborah Jinkins, Founding Principal and Assistant Professor, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas.

"Quality learning organizations, according to Peter Senge, invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and shared understandings." (Parker and Jinkins, 1997)

The work of this initiative began before there was a school. Several parents and a few teachers approached a principal they had worked with in the past with the idea of writing a charter school application. They worked through the application process, defining their mission, objectives, curriculum guidelines, procedures, facility needs,

along with budget and governance issues. This document was approved by the State Board of Education and NYOS (**N**ot **Y**our **O**rdinary **S**chool) was created.

An essential guiding principle from the charter drove our practice. Simply stated, students, parents, and teachers would discover and explore their "personal power". This looked different for a six-year-old than for a twelve-year-old or an adult. As the principal teacher, it was my responsibility to provide opportunities that expanded the personal power of all participants in our learning community and to keep the focus on the learning.

Teachers taught multi-aged groups of fifteen students each using a curriculum framework based on the TEKS. Creating common core understandings and practices in literacy and math instruction provided a coherent, unified theory of teaching and learning which was the foundation of the instructional program. All teachers participated in the same training for literacy and math so that our vocabulary, concepts, and applications were similar across the campus.

As part of this instructional emphasis, teacher leaders made weekly observations of their peers during literacy and math. Each week the classroom teacher developed an action plan. On the plan he described the lesson to be observed and identified the instructional strategy he was exploring. For example, the teacher might be working on some aspect of guided reading or running records. This self-identified objective became the point of focus for the teacher leader's observation. The teacher leader simply noted what the teacher said or did in relation to the objective. In a conference later in the day, she might say, "I heard you say, ".What is your understanding of....?" and wait for the teacher's response. The point of the conference was not "fix the teacher's instruction" by telling him what to do. Rather, the point was to pose questions, which facilitated his ability to clarify and articulate his understanding of the stated objective.

In addition to these common trainings, Friday afternoons were set aside for instructional dialogue. Teachers met for two hours each week to focus on some aspect of literacy or math instruction. For example, perhaps teachers had posed the problem of identifying teaching points from student writing samples. On Wednesday, a memo would be distributed that asked teachers to bring three draftbooks (similar to journals) to the dialogue session. During the session, the draftbooks were read and analyzed by teams of teachers each determining strengths, approximations, and the one teaching point they would address. After sharing several samples and justifying their own responses, the group would share and articulate their understandings of identifying teaching points. Often teachers would have different understandings of a concept or term. At these times, each teacher was asked to bring a research resource to inform the discussion. Teachers brought texts such as Dancing with the ! Pen, Reading in Junior Classes, and Becoming Literate. As teachers shared research and examined student work

samples, articulated and debated their own understandings and practice, individual preferences, values, and beliefs gave way to shared beliefs, values, and judgments of the learning community.

Parents participated in the exploration of personal power as they found ways to facilitate the learning. Parents and students knocked out walls, carried materials, painted, cleaned windows, and a hundred other jobs as the facility was remodeled. After the opening of school, parents volunteered for early morning and lunch playground duty. They served on committees to explore funding for various aspects of the program from brick and mortar to supplies for the science lab. Parents served on the governing council establishing policies, procedures and budgets that focused on making more learning happen for more kids.

As the students observed the adults around them exhibit personal power in ways that supported the whole community, they began to explore their own power to influence their world. The curriculum was designed around problems, which required students to investigate solutions, analyze consequences, research facts, and implement strategies for problem solving. Open-ended assessments allowed students to negotiate responses to problems with special attention to quality and independence. For example, students created service projects and fund-raisers to meet specific campus and community needs. Students acted as photographers for school events, writers of articles for newsletters, and participated in the evaluation process for grants.

Brian Cambourne (1988) suggests eight conditions for learning. The faculty of NYOS worked hard to put these in place for every student in their classroom. As the campus leader, I watched for these in classrooms and other school events. Over the course of this initiative, it became clear that these conditions of learning supported the transformation of all the learning community. These eight conditions include:

1. Immersion - the learner is surrounded by the behavior, concepts, etc.,
2. Demonstration - an experienced user of the skill models its use,
3. Engagement - the learner sees him/herself as a potential user of the skill and perceives benefit in the acquisition of the skill as well as feels free to attempt using the skill without fear of failure,
4. Expectation - someone valued by the learner communicates their belief that the learner will be successful,
5. Responsibility - the learner makes choices about application of the skill
6. Response - feedback is specific and timely,
7. Approximation - errors are expected and accepted as the process of moving closer to complete acquisition of the new skill,
8. Use - the learner has time and opportunity to practice the skill.

What principal preparation programs can learn from this scenario

As a community of learners in that first year at NYOS, Deborah Jinkins and the teachers in her school learned to live in relationship with one another and to support one another through close monitoring of the 8 conditions of learning. Teachers expected students to participate in peer conferences for writing and provide specific, constructive feedback to classmates. In the same way, Deborah Jinkins communicated to teachers the expectation that they participate in the weekly instructional dialogue sessions and develop their understandings, clarify their practice, and build a coherent theory of teaching and learning that they all shared.

Principal preparation programs should remember that the role of the principal is changing from the view that the principal "is the leader" to the principal "is the facilitator" of leadership, school wide leadership. The success of the principal is the role played in building leadership capacity through a shared vision and commitment to that vision.

Recommendations

1. Principals need to see that the eight conditions for learning are in place not only for the students on the campus but for their faculty and staff as well.
2. The establishment of core beliefs and values and common understandings of teaching and learning are foundational to developing instructional programs that accelerate student learning.
3. Principals who participate in observations of instruction a and subsequent reflective dialogue sessions with individuals or groups of teachers facilitate capacity-building in faculty and staff ensuring long-term change.
4. Establishing a common vocabulary for communicating understandings and practice regarding teaching/learning issues is an important element as teachers learn to articulate their theories and practice.

Expansion of the Mentoring Leadership Philosophy

An example of a *spin- off* from lessons learned in the RMP program is the Del Rio Recruitment Project. This project was a professional development framework for a leadership academy in rural West Texas. The Del Rio project was initiated by Dr. Patricia McNamara, a principal in the Del Rio Independent School District and a member of the Richardson Mentor Principal Fellows. The Del Rio project is an example of the effect of the RMP program on its participants. The project focused on recruiting

and training potential teacher leaders into assistant principal positions in rural communities in the southern most areas of Texas. The belief was that through mentoring and supportive training experiences, selected teacher leaders would stay and continue their leadership in small rural towns bordering Texas and Mexico. The project has become a good start in addressing recruitment and training issues in small rural communities.

What Principal Preparation Programs Can Learn From The Study and Three Scenarios

Preparation programs need to stress: 1) the importance of reflection on leadership practice, 2) the importance of building a mentor network (cohorts of graduate students to work together through the duration of their graduate studies), 3) the importance of linking theory to practice, and 4) the importance of contextual experiences in developing leadership skills prior to assuming an administrative position.

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